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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001587

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/14/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [BM](#) [ASSK](#)

SUBJECT: SPDC REMOVES ASSK'S PERSONAL BODYGUARDS FROM COMPOUND

REF: A. RANGOON 1530

[B](#). RANGOON 1508 (NOTAL)

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: According to the NLD, in the pre-dawn hours of December 14 GOB police officials required the departure of ASSK's entire contingent of personal bodyguards from the compound where she resides under house arrest. In recent weeks, the GOB has increasingly restricted access to ASSK and the NLD is concerned that it no longer has the ability to monitor her status on a daily basis. The NLD plans to issue a statement holding the GOB fully responsible for ASSK's health and welfare. We do not see any evidence that ASSK faces imminent danger, but the departure of her bodyguard is troubling and should the situation persist, appropriate Washington interventions and/or statements may be advisable. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) On December 14 NLD Spokesman U Lwin requested a meeting to inform us that the GOB had issued orders requiring the departure of Aung San Suu Kyi's entire personal bodyguard (a contingent of 13 young, loyal male supporters who are not NLD members) from the University Avenue compound where she is held under house arrest.

[1](#)3. (C) According to U Lwin, the Burmese Police Special Branch (SB) officers who recently joined military intelligence (MI) in overseeing the compound have become increasingly rigid toward ASSK and her supporters (ref B). In late November, authorities limited ASSK's personal physician to thrice weekly visits, a reduction from the daily access he has had since she was placed under house arrest in September 2003 (ref A). In subsequent weeks, the physician has been subject to random searches and interrogation. More recently (U Lwin did not specify when), SB officials informed ASSK that she would have to reduce her personal bodyguard from thirteen members to six. ASSK refused because, U Lwin explained, the entire contingent is required to fill shifts for 24-hour coverage at the compound.

[1](#)4. (C) In the pre-dawn hours of December 14, SB officers demanded that the NLD send a mid-level party member to ASSK's house to escort the members of the bodyguard, who were present at the time, off the compound. The NLD party member then drove the bodyguards to a Rangoon bus depot where most of them continued on to their hometowns (it is illegal to stay in Rangoon overnight at a private residence without registering with authorities). GOB security personnel, according to U Lwin, will henceforth prohibit access to the compound by any members of her personal bodyguard.

[1](#)5. (C) With the departure of the personal bodyguards, only two supporters remain inside the compound with ASSK: a trusted female NLD member who serves as a house manager and the NLD member's daughter who helps out with housekeeping. A combination of SB and MI personnel continue to maintain a presence outside the compound, which sits on the edge of a small lake in central Rangoon.

[1](#)6. (C) According to U Lwin, the NLD is drafting a statement, which the party plans to issue o/a December 16, that expresses serious concern about the situation at ASSK's compound and holds the GOB fully responsible for her health and welfare. The NLD is concerned that with the departure of ASSK's personal bodyguard, and the restrictions imposed on her physician, the party no longer has the ability to monitor her status on a daily basis. In addition to informing the U.S. mission about the new development, NLD leaders have also spoken to several other Rangoon diplomats as well as U.N. Special Envoy Razali's local liaison.

[1](#)7. (C) Comment: Emboffs have arranged to meet with NLD CEC members on December 16 for an update on the situation and, in the interim, we are seeking an opportunity to discuss with ICRC the need for that organization to press for regular access to ASSK (as far as we know, the ICRC has not been able to see ASSK for at least a year). Furthermore, the COM has previously requested meetings with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs, at which we had planned to raise a number of issues including once again our concerns about ASSK's prolonged detention. We will renew our requests for those meetings and, should they materialize, we will also

address the December 14 development at her compound. At this point, the NLD CEC has not requested assistance or action from the USG. We do not see any evidence that ASSK faces imminent danger, but the departure of her bodyguard is troubling and should the situation persist, we may recommend appropriate Washington interventions and/or statements. End Comment.

MARTINEZ